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Illinois State Capitol Sculptures: A Walking Tour

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Jesse White • Illinois Secretary of State

I am pleased to present this brochure about the statues located on the grounds of the Illinois State

We can take great pride in our State Capitol and the grounds surrounding it. The statues and monuments on the inside of this brochure add beauty and dignity to the area while providing a glimpse of the people who have helped shape Illinois' rich history.

I hope you find your walking tour of the Capitol grounds both interesting and educational.

Sincerely,

Jesse White

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Secretary of State



Illinois State Capitol A Walking Tour

Begin your tour at the Sundial at the north entrance of the Capitol and work your way clockwise.



Sundial

The bronze sundial was donated by the Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War (DUVCW) and dedicated to the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) on Sept. 8, 1940. The U.S. Marine Band played for the more than 500 in attendance. The ceremony was held in conjunction with the DUVCW's 50th annual national convention and the 74th GAR Encampment.

Illinois Workers Memorial

Paid for by donations from union members, this 3,000-lb. memorial "is dedicated to the memory of the thousands of Illinois workers killed and injured on the job." The bronze sculpture of three workers on top of a polished granite base was dedicated on April 28, 1992, with about 800 people in attendance. Illinois AFL-CIO President Richard Walsh and Chicago Federation of Labor President Robert Healey moderated the ceremony, with national AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland giving the keynote speech.

Sculptor: Peter Fagan, 1992



The Coal Miner

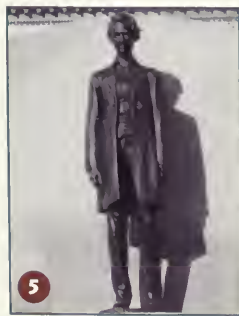
At the urging of Vachel Davis, a Southern Illinois coal miner, poet and artist, then state Rep. Paul Powell introduced a bill to appropriate \$15,000 for the creation of a monument honoring the Illinois coal miner. Davis worked with Tinley Park sculptor John Szaton to transform Davis' famous painting into a 7-ft. bronze statue. About 200 people attended the dedication ceremony on Oct. 16, 1964. The plaque identifying the sculptor and dedication date was added on Dec. 7, 1981.

Sculptor: John Szaton, 1964

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

This 300-lb. bronze statue of a 26-year-old Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., cost \$25,000 and was first unveiled in the Capitol rotunda on Jan. 14, 1988. King is the first non-Illinois resident to be honored with a statue. Then Secretary of State Jim Edgar said King "merits this special recognition for his contributions to Illinoisans of all colors and creeds." The statue remained in the Capitol for one year before being moved to outside of the Illinois State Museum in 1989. In May 1993, the statue was moved to its current location at "Freedom Corner," facing the Abraham Lincoln statue, and was rededicated on Sept. 18, 1993.

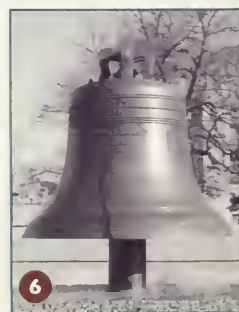
Sculptor: Geraldine McCullough, 1988



Abraham Lincoln

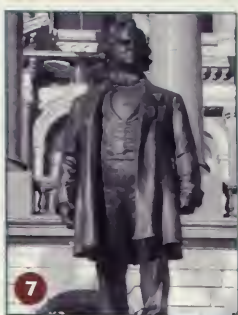
In 1913, the Illinois State Art Commission was authorized to secure a new statue of Abraham Lincoln for Illinois' centennial. The 10-ft., 6-in. bronze statue and large granite base and backdrop, engraved with Lincoln's "Farewell to Springfield" speech, cost about \$50,000. The statue was dedicated on Oct. 5, 1918, the centennial of the first meeting of the Illinois General Assembly. Lincoln biographer Lord Charnwood (William Arthur Smith Benson) gave the keynote address, and Illinois poet Vachel Lindsay recited his poem, "When Lincoln Walks at Midnight in Springfield."

Sculptor: Andrew O'Connor, 1918



Liberty Bell

In 1950, to promote the sale of U.S. Savings Bonds, 54 replicas of the Liberty Bell were cast in Annecy le Vieux, France, and distributed to the states by the U.S. Treasury Department. Abandoned at the Illinois State Fairgrounds for 25 years, the 2,000-lb. bell was resurrected in 1976 and toured every county as part of the Secretary of State's Illinois bicentennial exhibit. The bronze reproduction, which has the same cast inscription as the original bell in Philadelphia and the famous crack hand-painted, was moved to the Capitol grounds on April 28, 1977.



Stephen A. Douglas

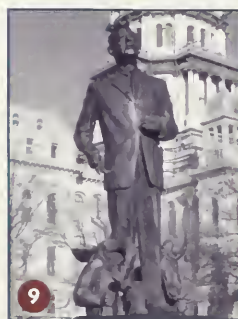
The "Little Giant's" statue was funded through the same 1913 appropriation as the Lincoln statue and produced for about \$25,000. Dedication of the statue of Lincoln's Democrat rival was on Oct. 5, 1918. Douglas' great-granddaughter placed a wreath at the foot of the statue in its original location just north of the Lincoln statue. The statue was moved in 1935 to its present location. Engraved on the base of the statue is Douglas' dying message to his children, "...to obey the laws and support the Constitution of the United States."

Sculptor: Gilbert P. Riswold, 1918

Pierre Menard

The 8-ft. bronze statue of Illinois' first Lt. Governor was the first to be placed on the Capitol lawn on May 28, 1886. A French-Canadian, Menard is depicted trading with a Native American along the Mississippi River. The fox skin and calumet pipe symbolize the peaceful commerce Menard fostered between the Indian and white communities. Charles Chouteau, the son of Menard's former business partner, donated about \$10,000 for the statue and 10-ft. granite base. The statue was dedicated on Jan. 10, 1888, and moved to its current location in 1918 to make room for the Douglas statue.

Sculptor: John H. Mahoney, 1886



Everett McKinley Dirksen

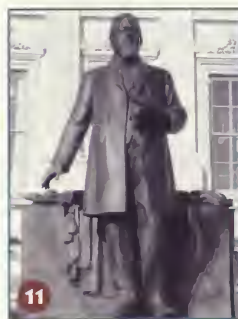
This 11-ft. bronze statue was commissioned by the Dirksen Memorial Commission and financed by the State of Illinois. Dirksen served Illinois for 34 years as a Republican Congressman and U.S. Senator. An elephant, donkey and oil can flank his figure, symbolizing his persuasive skills to get both Republicans and Democrats to cooperate and enact vital legislation. Dedicated on Sept. 16, 1976, six years after his death, the monument also contains a cluster of marigolds, which Dirksen hoped would be named the national flower.

Sculptor: Carl Tolpo, 1975

Richard Yates

"The wounded soldier's friend" is inscribed on the 9-ft. granite base of the statue of former Illinois Gov. and Sen. Richard Yates. The 8-ft. bronze statue was paid for by the State of Illinois. During a joint dedication ceremony for the Yates and John M. Palmer statues on Oct. 16, 1923, Yates' son, Richard, a former Governor himself, spoke about his father, whose most brilliant service was during the four tumultuous years of the Civil War. Many Civil War veterans attended the ceremony.

Sculptor: Albin Polasek, 1921



John M. Palmer

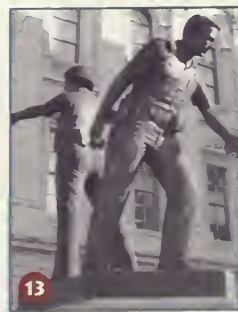
John M. Palmer began his political career as a Democrat but became an outspoken critic against slavery and helped create the Republican Party in 1856. After serving as a general in the Civil War and military governor of Kentucky, he was elected Republican Governor of Illinois in 1868. On March 11, 1891, on the 154th ballot, the General Assembly elected Palmer a Democrat U.S. Senator. Among those in attendance at the Oct. 16, 1923, dedication of the statue was Palmer's daughter, State Historian Mrs. Jessie Palmer Weber.

Sculptor: Leonard Crunelle, 1923

Illinois Firefighter Memorial

The Capitol's newest memorial was dedicated on May 13, 1999, "to the firefighters of Illinois who have given their lives in the line of duty and to those who heroically serve with courage, pride and honor." The memorial of four life-size, bronze firefighters and a rescued child on a 14-ft.-tall stone cairn is surrounded by 2,400 red paver bricks and enclosed by a 2-ft. wall. It was built through public contributions and the sale of Firefighter Memorial license plates. A ceremony is held at the memorial each May honoring Illinois Fallen Firefighter Memorial Day.

Sculptor: Neil Brodin, 1999



Illinois Police Officers Memorial

This memorial, with its life-size bronze figures of a male and a female police officer, was dedicated on Oct. 29, 1990, in memory of Illinois police officers killed in the line of duty. The 13-ft. monument has a pedestal and base of red granite and was paid for with \$85,000 in public donations. Each May, on National Police Officers Memorial Day, a ceremony is held to honor officers recently killed in the line of duty. Their names are added to the original 643 officers engraved on the surrounding polished black granite slates.

Sculptor: Keith Knoblock, 1990



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*“Monuments and statues...are the
open books of civilization...made to
perpetuate the memories of those
who have been true and faithful in
the battle of life.”*

*— Judge Henry S. Baker
at the dedication of the Pierre Menard statue*

